

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 368 644

SO 023 823

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TITLE The Challenges to Education Systems from the Contemporary Cultural Dynamic.
INSTITUTION United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, Paris (France).
REPORT NO ED/BIE/CONFINTED-43/Ref-4
PUB DATE Aug 92
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at UNESCO's International Conference on Education (43rd, Geneva, Switzerland, 14-19 September 1992).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Cultural Literacy; *Cultural Traits; Democracy; Educational Anthropology; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Metalinguistics; *Modernization; *Multicultural Education; *Role of Education; Sociolinguistics; *Traditionalism

ABSTRACT

This document examines the contribution of education to cultural development and the relationship between the contemporary cultural scene and educational processes. The first of five sections discusses the existing tensions between the role of the school culture and contemporary culture. The second section describes the demands of tradition and modernity of cultures. The third section presents culture as an element in democratization. The fourth section considers the question of linguistics by educational authorities. The final section suggests the ambiguous roles of multicultural societies and intercultural education. A 22-item bibliography is included.

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ED 368 644

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION

43rd session

International Conference Centre, Geneva

14-19 September 1992

THE CONTRIBUTION OF EDUCATION TO CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

**"The challenges to education systems
from the contemporary cultural dynamic "**

by

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I. SCHOOL CULTURE AND CONTEMPORARY CULTURES

1. Since this document is intended above all to stimulate a discussion on the relationship between the contemporary cultural scene and educational processes, we will not dwell on the complexity of the academic discussion on the concept of "culture" (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952). Basing ourselves on the definition proposed by the World Conference on Cultural Policies (Mexico City, 1962) and given the purpose of the discussion, we consider it would be useful to distinguish between:

A. Culture as erudite culture as found in scientific, literary and artistic "works" which serve as "classical" references. This cultural concept is that of minorities ("elites") who dictate this dominant culture. Access to it is restricted and involves an introduction to its codes only obtainable through education and training. Thus, the school plays the role of "civilizing influence" in the modern State.

B. Culture as popular culture as found in the living language, in folklore, in the manufacture of craft objects and in the way that the majority of the population create their environment in any territory or by nomads (those without territory). Although often dismissed or placed on the fringes of society by the official culture, it is nevertheless passed on within local and/regional communities through their social structures.

C. Culture as anthropological culture on which are based sociality and identification processes. It is made up of socio-economic and linguistic heritages, religious and political institutions, a network of relationships between individuals and groups which is exemplified by specific local and regional characteristics: dialects, customs, landscape, values and specific ceremonies (Bassand & Hainard, 1985). In this situation the role of the school is ambiguous: when it plays a central role in the community, it compliments the living culture; when it is only interested in modernity, it directs the most active young people towards urban centres, "skimming off" local resources.

2. By taking these three cultural trends as our reference, it is possible to observe a few significant tensions in our complex societies:

A. First, the extension of school enrolment and, above all, the integration of educational institutions (as well as out-of-school institutions) into "education systems" with the result that the relative autonomy of the culture belonging to these "systems", which we shall call the school culture, is reinforced. What we mean by this is a system of norms, values and rules of procedure for institutions laid down by the State in accordance with its social structures, its socio-political and socio-cultural systems, and its history. This school culture manifests itself in the content of teaching (syllabuses and curricula), teaching methods and styles (pedagogy), equipment and classrooms ("educational architecture"), teachers trained according to fixed methods (teacher training institutions), all of which lead to the development of typical attitudes, behaviour and professional practices (Furter, 1986). The significance of this school culture is evident in the fact that increasingly it only tends to reflect a part of the erudite culture, that part thought to be "communicable", sufficiently "indicative" to feature in curricula at the risk of becoming a mockery of the cultural dynamic.

B. With the increasing stress on industrialization and the services sector, leading to the emergence of a new social structure - the "programmed society" with its ideas about scientific efficiency - the linkage between popular culture and school culture is changing dramatically. Alongside urbanization, we find the centralization of education and urbanization of the school culture accompanied by the evolution of other socio-cultural institutions (churches, adult education and cultural activities, vocational training, leisure activities). The "education system" no longer belongs to the community making it almost

impossible for the local and/or regional authorities to intervene. Such a breakdown accelerates the inability of the local or regional community to change its specific identity, projects and know-how (Furter, 1983).

C. Finally, the extraordinary modern cultural momentum has multiplied and diversified the agents and institutions involved; the communications media are brought into contact with the culture of formerly remote civilizations; all cultures have become a product manufactured by the "culture industry", sometimes called "mass culture"; such that education only represents one sector - however strategic - in the new, modern cultural scene. The school is no longer creating the culture and the institutions of the "education system" are playing a decreasing role in its spread. Other institutions (radio and television, religious sects and the military, advertising, the leisure industry and tourism) "educate", "train" and "cultivate" in a more efficient, more continuous manner, and more systematically than all the educational institutions put together - including the out-of-school ones - with their armies of teachers completely overwhelmed by successive crises (Coombs, 1964 and 1985). To the progressive breakdown set in motion in all countries between the school culture and everything that makes up "contemporary culture" should be added in the countries of the South a resistance - expressed according to the typical dichotomies beloved of Western thought - between "tradition" and "modernity", between (anthropological) "culture" and "development".

II. TRADITION OR MODERNITY: A FALSE ALTERNATIVE AND THE HISTORICAL RISE OF COMMON CULTURES

3. The concept of "cultural development" was created in an attempt to reconcile two demands, often contradictory, consisting of "development" and culture.

As far as the phenomenon of "development" is concerned, there is no universally accepted definition on which we can base ourselves. Nevertheless, it can be observed that the majority of indicators in current use speak about it initially as economic growth, expressed in terms of gross national product. This implicit definition, underlying current practice, therefore describes "development" as the level a country has reached in its capacity to change nature and social relations into marketable goods and services. This means that, in fact, a society is "developed" in as much as it is able to pay for the goods and services which were once supplied by the social structure in a situation of self-sufficiency, reciprocity and redistribution (Polanyi, 1983). At the same time, this definition/description (which has the great merit of being based on measurable phenomena) is usually accompanied by normative observations which vary considerably from one author to another and which lead one to think that "development" is only the "extra motivation" necessary for the inherent violence resulting from economic growth to be accepted. Indeed, however great the efforts expended to distinguish (economic) growth from ("human"?) "development", they are not convincing: in each case, the first constitutes an essential pre-condition for the second. Recent reports by the United Nations Development Programme (1991, 1992) have shown that finance devoted to "human development" is always derisory, whether assessed as a percentage of public expenditure - or of international aid. While the moralist bemoans this state of affairs, the sociologist merely observes it.

As far as culture is concerned, the definition given in the Declaration of Mexico - and which, in general, corresponds to the anthropological tradition - obviously includes economic aspects and ways of organizing production in a given society.

Thus, at the theoretical level, rather than viewing culture as a "dimension" of "development", or of speaking about "cultural development" (which would reduce culture to a simple adjective for a basically economic phenomenon), it would seem preferable to

reverse these terms and to consider "development" as a (material) dimension of culture in order to imagine ways of improving the living conditions of various societies based on existing cultural "components", rather than adapting them to a model ("development") which is wrongly supposed to be trans-cultural.

4. This being said, "development" and "culture" are abstract concepts which only "meet" through actual societies and people, in particular in situations exemplified over several centuries by the existence of a power relationship, which has too often not been mentioned in documents published by international organizations.

Any project for the training of human resources must then take into account what Georges Balandier (1985) called the "inward dynamic" and the "outward dynamic". We should take note that each of these dynamics has many facets since they are propelled by different actors. We must then avoid the simplistic dichotomy which confronts "tradition", meaning a past which must be protected (and which is only worth being shelved in a museum), with "modernity", defined by the science and the technology which are obviously going to replace former values and beliefs: traditional societies were never without technology or "scientific" reasoning (even if they were less concerned than Western society by the relentless search for improvement); as for the science and the technology (of the West), they do themselves express values and beliefs (even when these are hidden under the facade of objective neutrality).

Contrary to common sense, tradition is not fixed; on the contrary, it represents a mechanism which permits and authorizes change by linking it with history. Once granted the hallmark of tradition, innovations become acceptable, which means that they are included among those things which go without saying since henceforth nobody can question their validity. This procedure could affect the introduction of new vegetable species, as much as new technologies or social practices. In the same way, "modernity" - and particularly all those matters involving economic rationalization forming the hard core of "development" - is also based on a tradition embedded in Western history, and which considers as obvious, if we limit ourselves to some of its characteristics, the equality of the actors, the utilitarian goal of human behaviour, the legal responsibility of individuals, and the disenchantment of the world.

In modern societies in the South, both of these forms of tradition (that arising from the cultural heritage of a given society and that progressively accepted - or forced upon - in the name of "development") are also present but take on different levels of importance according to the place, the time and the actors concerned. Both of them are taken into consideration, if possible simultaneously or alternately, when contradictions become too evident, to the extent determined by the behaviour of the actors and the type of answers which various traditions seem to offer: indeed, even if some people don't like it, bringing them together into a coherent whole does not yet seem to have been achieved. Thus, negotiating tactics with the administration are sometimes based on the "modern" legal system and sometimes on custom; some family or social ceremonies are based on ancient customs while incorporating "modern" elements (giving money instead of gifts in kind, for example); therapeutic procedures can vary between modern medicine and witchcraft according to the meaning attributed to the kind of misfortune identified and the type of diagnosis expected; formal education could belong to the techniques of social advancement, or access to power or to prestige, which may counteract or strengthen other socially acceptable methods (belonging to a social network, to an age group, etc.) in order to arrive at the same result. The reaction of societies to outside influences is not necessarily direct. They are too subtle to correspond to the law of "all or nothing", since they are likely to lose out in either situation. Rather like the judo wrestler who overcomes by turning the force of his adversary to his own advantage, they twist and turn. The "global village" where everyone lives in harmony is not yet here. Neither will it be possible to achieve "ethnically pure" communities, despite the

fanaticism which can be witnessed at present as a reaction to moves towards ideological, political and/or religious standardization. Usually, social logic is selective and employs combinations such as that used in the "informal" sector which only exists as a result of its relationship - even harmful - with the "structured" sector. No doubt the same is true for education.

Of course, some intellectuals - for example, P.E.A. Elungu (1987) in Zaire - are in favour of the total abandonment of tradition in favour of "modernity", while, in contrast, other societies are seeking their salvation through their traditional heritage (Bonnemaïson, 1986). But these two opposing extremes, both probably heading for disaster, are relatively rare. Since time immemorial, societies have been of mixed race and have survived through borrowing. But while, for many centuries, the slow assimilation of foreign elements has assisted cultural synthesis, the wave of colonialism followed by the "development tradition" have made mixed race a problem, except in some societies which have only accepted "modernity" in tiny doses. Thus, due to the speed and violence of processes set in motion by modernity, the resulting mixture is rarely stable, both in the North and in the South, and can be accompanied by rejection when it does not favour the worst excesses of competing traditions.

5. In any event, to consider the historic phenomenon in its totality, one can note the rise almost everywhere of "common cultures" (Le Roy, 1990) of which the outward signs are the use - by the same social actors - of several languages in different situations. We could say that the spoken language is used exclusively for immediate contacts; a common language is used for inter-regional exchanges; while the official language (frequently of European origin) is the language of power and of the State. This multi-lingualism - often imperfectly spoken but necessary - is the sign of belonging to several groups within different traditional worlds which nevertheless make up a common culture - however heterogeneous - to the extent that it belongs to everybody, receives contributions from everybody and does not allow one to "distinguish" some actors from any of the others. It is possible to see in this jumble of overlapping interests a way of mastering one's own destiny, of creating places or values worthy of conservation, of admitting that it is necessary to make certain concessions, of avoiding certain duties (particularly State duties) in the interests of safeguarding the life of the group or the family (which has also been constructed by adapting former rules to the new situation). Administrative procedures, the laws of inheritance as well as typical promotion procedures in the school are indicators of these common procedures in the making.

All of these cultural tactics, of course, enable some of the practices of the "development tradition" to be integrated with the original culture. Nevertheless, each social actor is involved in a network of multiple obligations, sometimes contradictory, which often make his/her behaviour unpredictable (for the planner or the "developer") depending on what he/she considers under the circumstances to be the course of action liable to be in the best interests of the individual and the group - or network - leading to the hoped for social acceptance (which can also be measured in contradictory values). One can therefore never assume that, for example, (Western) "science and technology" should always be considered as worthy of interest by those in learning situations since the cultural and social system might make it necessary for them to acquire more useful skills beforehand.

III. CULTURE AS AN ELEMENT IN DEMOCRATIZATION

6. The modern cultural dynamic has been profoundly affected by both the concerns of international organizations and the governments of Member States to define cultural policies and to contribute to their introduction to the limit of their possibilities. In the first instance this leads to cultural democratization, which means redistributing the

benefits of a dominant culture to a wider public. This is the way that artistic creativity, conservation and distribution of works of art and the heritage are encouraged. Subsequently, the field of cultural policies spreads out into formal and out-of-school education, to the culture and communications industries, to the popularization of scientific culture. An effort is made to decentralize the new institutions and to set up better infrastructures (see, for example, "les Maisons de la Culture"); new professions are created with specialized training branches; finally, cultural finances and budgets are dealt with. Nevertheless, the major concern today is to set up a cultural democracy using policies which, through the wider diffusion of cultural property and access to works, are designed to increase the involvement in culture by the collective ownership of institutions, their structures and their equipment by the "users". In a society which is increasingly saturated with cultural groups, it is essential to ensure the participation of the people in the definition of cultural goals for development. In this way they can prove both to themselves and to others that they are also capable of expressing themselves (Touraine, 1967). This means that priority must be given to daily life in the cultural dynamic by working on the encouragement of true human relations, emotional life, happiness, the stimulation of creativity (and not only creating), to support communication, confrontation and decentralization (Bassand & Hainard, 1985).

7. It is not only within cultural policies that the challenge of (cultural) plurality is evident: the most respectful and careful knowledge, followed by an awareness of the simultaneous existence of separate civilizations - not in any way sympathetic - raises questions about limiting this diversity to "the" culture. Is not the "loss of direction" which societies are experiencing at present linked to the terrible jumble of values, which are said to be "universal" as they can be found in international law, human rights, ... but "universal" culture as well - which does not stop us still believing in it - in short, everything which is based on and contributes to that much desired "universal understanding"? Furthermore, recent events have shown that even within civilizations multiple cultures co-exist, which, when allowed freedom of expression, lead to the breakdown of Nation States¹. These events not only call into question the power structures, but they also reveal the vitality of "cultural survivals" transforming themselves into cultural activities revealing new identities and calling for the creation of new cultural units. This is true not only at the level of States, but in their internal structure since communities with neither land nor statehood demand today their own characteristics and their right to exist either within more democratic or more pluralist States, or by their independence. Let it be understood, however, that the interpretation of these movements is difficult because the desire for cultural plurality is accompanied and strengthened by differences of behaviour, of attitudes and of involvement according to the socio-economic and socio-professional group.

IV. THE DIFFICULT QUESTION OF LINGUISTICS

8. The choice of language to be used in teaching and the importance of different languages in what one could consider as "linguistic policies" have in the past (too) often provoked conflicts, sometimes with tragic consequences, so that we cannot avoid the

¹. Without becoming involved in the vast modern debate on the subject of Nation States, in this document we have set out with the idea that modern States define their political organization through all the socio-cultural structures existing on their national territory. This definition is often called into question today either because single identity is only apparent - Nation States are in fact made up of several federal, associated or other groups of people; or because the pressure of nationalist movements has caused "empires" and even Nation States to disintegrate into several independent political units.

necessity of paying great attention to their spread following the emergence of nationalist movements. These conflicts were not only the consequence of overlooking the significance of languages in any process of identity (see the call for "mother-tongues!"); rather they reveal the dilemmas associated with such linguistic policies: should "written" languages systematically take precedence over "spoken" languages; or should the national language(s) with limited means of diffusion be preferred to "cross-national" languages which facilitate not only communication but the mobility of people as well (and sometimes above all)? These dilemmas are the outcome of the particular characteristics of the language factor in the cultural dynamic, in other words its function as an instrument of communication and exchange which it is not easy to reconcile with its expressive or symbolic function making it a particularly efficient tool in the granting of well as in the process of acculturation which accompanies the process of identity. In other words, the choice of language could just as well facilitate communication with foreign countries as much as it could turn a community in on itself. This also means that language is another factor in the cultural dynamic. On the contrary, in the field of symbolic productions, language plays a unique role as an outstanding and particular resource.

9. These are very worrying problems because the "solutions" tried out so far have taken the form of bilingualism based on the legal and educational acceptance of multilingual situations where two languages - or two dialects of the same language - can exist together. While this system seems to be most useful in the development of individuals - particularly for the most privileged among them - it is incapable of preventing diglossia, which means the replacement and domination of the language considered as "inferior" by the language considered as "superior"; in the long run, the former is condemned to oblivion (Ninyoles, 1977).

10. It is not altogether certain that legal measures will be able to provide solutions (Ninyoles, 1976). Thus, attributing a language to a particular territory certainly allows each territory to achieve linguistic unity within a pluralist State. Such "attribution" also means that considerable and expensive resources will be made available with only long-term effects. But, above all, this attribution does not provide any kind of solution to the problem of "migrants" and does not guarantee human rights. In fact, this last principle grants individuals particular services in their own language wherever they find themselves. These, it seems, are the main questions which can be answered neither by educators alone nor by a simple reform or reorganization of the "education systems". We are, in fact, confronted with a fundamental question of modern cultural democracy (Petrella, 1976).

11. Nevertheless, the linguistic question has to be considered by the educational authorities who, once more, have to assume a strategic role. Indeed, whatever solution is found, it will be while attending school that the majority or even the totality of a population will strengthen, organize and interiorize its knowledge, ability and command of the linguistic code(s) at the same time as being introduced to the values and norms conveyed by language.

V. MULTICULTURAL SOCIETIES AND INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION: AMBIGUOUS ROLES

12. Let us recall the distinction that we established at the beginning of this document between the anthropological definition of culture and its definition as artistic or "erudite" culture. The definition given in the IBE questionnaire is quite clear: Culture is more than erudite, since "it includes not only the arts and letters but ... traditions and beliefs", as well as all the symbolic aspects of human thought.

If this definition has the advantage of being clear, the fact that it was necessary to remind us that culture includes things other than "the arts and letters" pinpoints the problem; misunderstanding is not far away and may at any time cast doubts. When we speak of cultural development or cultural life, one is given to think that the "artistic and erudite culture" is also included, despite the anthropological definition.

13. The ambiguity of erudite culture. The basic distinction between "culture" - taken in its anthropological meaning - and erudite culture is important because the role of the latter is ambiguous. Usually it is automatically understood as a spiritual and intellectual enrichment and, therefore, an improvement to the quality of life. This may often be the case, but a misunderstanding arises when erudite culture is imported or dictated and reflects social domination, either actual or symbolic, of one group by another (or of one class by another). If the models of imported erudite culture are also presented as superior to domestic models, the latter lose some of their value. Thus, being well informed about foreign cultures through the cinema, the theatre or music can be seen either as an enrichment or, on the contrary, as a way of losing touch with one's own culture.

14. The ambiguity of the culture industry. The extraordinary growth in what we can call the culture industry, particularly through the invasion by the mass media (radio, television, cinema) of the fields of entertainment and leisure, as well as other forms of communication such as tourism, have led to a sort of "cross-national" culture. This means that, nearly everywhere, we listen to the same music, dance to the same tunes, watch the same television series and smile at the same newspaper cartoons. This "cross-national" culture, which could easily become the "world cultural heritage", is not the prerogative of a single society but forms a sort of hybrid culture, in the same way that some languages of international communication (such as English) no longer belong to a single nation. This analogy is significant: while it would be nice to see the development of a common lingua franca for humanity, it would be sad to accept the resulting homogenization; alternatively, while being ready to speak English, one might regard this choice as external domination and a loss of identity.

Furthermore, the culture industry, however cross-national it seems to be, is dominated by certain groups and particularly by certain economic interests. In this way it is contributing to neo-colonialism and to cultural domination.

15. The ambiguous role of education. We are using here the term "education" in its usual meaning of formal education (or schooling, literacy, etc.). Education conveys in the first place the erudite culture, and is often associated with the culture industry in promoting cross-national culture. The role of education itself is therefore ambiguous.

Education as a tool for acculturation has been analysed innumerable times, but we must, of course, situate the phenomenon in its context. Depending upon the socio-historical context, the conflict between the knowledge and values communicated by formal education and those learned through "informal" education (in the family, in the community, etc.) assumes different forms. One could incorporate with this theme the study of the "hidden" or "evil" curriculum of education, which also depend very much on the context: loss of cultural values (for example, in the rural world, in agricultural activities); the conflict of generations; rural exodus; the collapse of social structures; the creation of dominant classes, etc. These effects are well known but it seems difficult to create defenses against them.

16. Multicultural societies. Let us recall the definitions used in the questionnaire: For the purposes of this questionnaire, the term "intercultural" means interaction between cultures; and the term "multicultural" means co-existence and mutual understanding between various cultures in the same society (p. 8).

We should pay attention to differences in the definition of these terms, in particular between English and French usage. In French-speaking countries, these two terms are often used in the opposing sense. We speak of "multicultural societies", particularly in the context in the co-existence of several groups of culturally diverse origins, without there necessarily being any "mutual understanding". In fact, the type of interaction between different groups depends largely on attitudes in the accepting society. In Canada, the meaning is slightly different and there they do indeed speak of "multicultural policies" which are designed specifically to promote tolerance between individuals and groups.

Of course, in a strict sense, all societies are and always have been multicultural: migrations and inter-mixing, not to mention conflicts, are what history is all about (Camilleri & Cohen-Emerique, 1989). All countries which have experienced colonization, with ethnic redistribution within more or less haphazard frontiers, and the countries of Eastern Europe which have recently rediscovered their independence, are outstandingly multicultural and therefore have to overcome problems connected with cultural diversity. The majority of States are trying to promote national unity by negating ethnic differences and by favouring integration policies; this is the procedure adopted by the United States of America, for example (the "melting pot": E pluribus unum) and France (concerning regional cultures).

According to psycho-sociological research, it is possible to put forward the arguments that this was a bad decision. Indeed, even in homogenous social groups, people seek individuality and membership of sub-groups. It seems that possessing a unique cultural identity and having equal access to resources encourages groups to interact in a peaceful manner within complex societies by respecting and appreciating their differences (Berry, 1991; Tajfel, 1982; Aboud & Skerry, 1984).

17. The ambiguous role of intercultural education. Recently a lot has been written about "intercultural" education (Ouellet, 1991; Rey, 1984), that is to say education designed to promote the respect of cultural diversity and international understanding, as well as teacher training for these purposes. This is an enormous field which we could not possibly deal with in detail here. So we will limit ourselves to raising some points which could stimulate the discussions:

- I. Intercultural education is often confused with special educational measures for the children of migrants: remedial measures, language learning, etc. But these measures are often the outward expression of assimilation policies, whereas intercultural education ought to be made available to all pupils with a view to integration.
- II. Intercultural teaching is often relegated to peripheral school activities or to inferior subjects (geography, history, art). A true intercultural education should not consist uniquely of supplementary content, but should be present in the teaching of all subjects and throughout the education system.
- III. It can be noted that there is often inconsistency between statements about intercultural teaching and the contrary implied message, often mono-cultural, which the institution conveys.
- IV. There is also often inconsistency between the conciliatory message of intercultural education and the quite different attitudes (ethno-centrism, racism, violence, etc.) found in the family and in the media. While education can be a useful vehicle for transferring ethical values, it is nevertheless affected by the dominant values within society.

- V. Awareness of cultural pluralism does not necessary lead to peaceful co-existence; the cultural dynamic also consists of meetings, exchanges, confrontations and even conflicts.

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